

PART VI

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Miami-Dade County is the largest county in the State of Florida with a population of over 2.3 million. The county is multi-lingual and multi-cultural with Hispanics having the highest percentage of residents at 57.3 %. The population also includes 20.7% Non-Hispanic White, 19.0% Black and 1.4% Asian and other.

In the United States today, seven (7) of ten (10) deaths and the vast majority of serious illness, disability, and health care cost are caused by chronic diseases, such as diabetes, asthma, and obesity. Underlying these serious diseases are several important risk factors that can be modified years before they contribute to illness and death.

The 2002 County Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) examined risk factors for chronic disease including diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Findings for Miami-Dade County showed that there was a need for a community action and awareness program to promote living a healthy lifestyle.

Prevalence of Major Behavioral Risk Factors for Miami-Dade County

2002 County Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System

Risk Factor: Physical Activity		
No leisure time physical activity	No regular moderate physical activity	No regular vigorous activity
33.5 %	58.6 %	76.3 %
Risk Factor: Overweight and Nutrition		
Overweight	Obese	Less than 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day
37.6 %	19.9 %	75.6 %
Risk Factor: Tobacco Use		
Current Smoker	Tried to quit smoking in last 12 months	
18.8 %	55.7 %	

In 2003, the Office of Mayor Alex Penelas, in partnership with the Health Foundation of South Florida, Inc., designed and developed the Mayor's Health and Fitness Challenge to promote general wellness and physical fitness in Miami-Dade County. The challenge to the community was to: Get Fit! Eat Right! Chill Out! The Challenge was designed to be culturally and ethnically sensitive and to provide opportunities for residents of underserved areas to participate in wellness activities and health screenings.

The Challenge consisted of three (3) specific sections: physical fitness (Get Fit!), Nutrition (Eat Right!) and stress reduction and management (Chill Out!). The methodology for implementation of the challenge was to hold a series of events throughout Miami-Dade County that offered health screenings, educational materials and gave the participants the opportunity to sign up and take "the challenge" and begin living a healthier lifestyle. Each person who signed up to take the challenge was asked to complete a questionnaire about their current health related habits including eating, smoking and preventive care with a primary healthcare

provider. The registrant's height, weight, body mass index (BMI) and blood pressure were then measured to provide them with their baseline data. They were also provided with information related to a healthy BMI and blood pressure level.

The first of the events took place on July 4, 2003 at Amelia Earhart Park. This event introduced the Challenge to the community and included a wide range of screenings and information promoting general wellness. This was also an opportunity for the community to sign up to take the challenge.

Mayor's Health and Fitness Challenge Events Information

Date/Event Location	Registered Participants	Attendees
July 4, 2004 Amelia Earhart Park	Adults 219 Children 140	1,000
August 1, 2003 Homestead Mainstreet Fair	Adults 40 Children 25	150
September 27, 2003 Heart Association Walk	Adults 105 Children 59	3,500
October 18 – 19, 2003 Miami International Mall Women's Expo and Health Fair	Adults 162 Children 31	2,500
November 1 – 2, 2003 South Miami Festival of the Arts	Adults 343 Children 48	50,000
December 3, 2003 Zumba on the Courthouse Steps	Adults 63 Children 5	1,000
January 23, 2004 Health and Fitness Day at Caleb Center	Adults 194 Children 49	300
February 14 – 15, 2004 2004 Washington Mutual Coconut Grove Arts Festival	Adults 207 Children 307	250,000
February 21, 2004 Nickelodeon's Let's Just Play – Tropical Park	Adults 684 Children 523	5,000
March 27, 2004 Miami Beach Fitness Festival	Adults 90 Children 11	2,500
April 28 – 30, 2004 Publix Grocery Tours	Adults 153 Children 50	750
May 21, 2004 Senior Olympics at Goulds Park Gym	Adults 291	320
June 19, 2004 Closing Bash at Tropical Park	Adults 249 Children 257	1,300
Mobile Classes - Tai Chi and Hip Hop and Chair Aerobic Classes	Adults 570 Children 20	590
Miami-Dade County - Stephen P. Clark Building Lobby Events	Adults 744 Children 188	5,000
TOTALS	5,827	323,910

The events continued throughout the year with community and funding support from numerous businesses, organizations and government agencies. In addition, to participation in Challenge

events, many of these businesses and organizations implemented projects and programs that complemented and enhanced the Challenge through education and actions.

The interest of local businesses resulted in the development of the Corporate Challenge. This sub-component of the Challenge included seven (7) companies that were given the challenge of increasing employee awareness related to nutrition, health and fitness.

RESULTS OF THE CHALLENGE

One of the major findings from the data collected during the blood pressure screenings showed that at all but one site, the average blood pressure reading was greater than 120/80. Based upon the latest standards for blood pressure levels, the average participant in the Challenge was at the pre-hypertensive level.

Another finding was that the average BMI at all locations showed that participants were either in the overweight range with BMI greater than twenty-five (25) or obese range with a BMI greater than thirty (30). This also shows the need for lifestyle changes.

Those who participated in the Challenge were provided with the information needed to make necessary lifestyle changes. The information was provided in English, Spanish and Creole and selected by appropriate credentialed professionals. It included information related to nutrition, exercise, and the need for regular blood pressure screenings.

New complimentary initiatives that were created after the implementation of the Mayor's Health and Fitness Challenge:

Miami-Dade County Department of Parks and Recreation

- Creation of a Miami-Dade County Wellness Coordinator for the development of additional health and fitness community awareness programs and activities.
- Creation of a Parks Foundation

Miami-Dade County Health Department

- Established the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade to bring the community together to work toward the reduction of chronic disease in Miami-Dade County. The Office of the Mayor and other County agencies are represented.
- Publication of the Comprehensive Assessment for Tracking Community Health (CATCH) in partnership with the Health Council of South Florida and the Allegany Franciscan Foundation. This document provides health status data related to the community along with comparison to other similar communities.
- Step Up, Florida – A statewide event to bring awareness about the need for physical activity for good health. This event involved walking from county to county with the final leg being a walk up the Capitol steps on the opening day of the Florida Legislative Session.

- Started the “Pedometer Challenge” which includes a training session on starting a safe walking program and a pedometer to track daily steps. The project was started within the MDCHD and has since been deployed into businesses in the community.

Jackson Memorial Hospital

- Implemented an employee wellness program

Miami-Dade County Public Library System

- Developed a reference folder for those wanting additional wellness information

American Airlines

- Utilized the mobile classes to augment their existing wellness programs

Senior Community Centers

- Utilized the mobile classes of Hip Hop Chair Aerobics and Tai Chi during the challenge which were later implanted into the center’s wellness program

Governor’s Task Force on the Obesity Epidemic

- Governor Jeb Bush created the Governor’s Task Force on the Obesity Epidemic to address the increasing obesity rates among youth and adults in Florida.
- A series of hearings were held around the state including one (1) in Miami to give the public an opportunity to make suggestions to the task force who then made recommendations to the Governor and Florida Legislature.
- Three (3) representatives from the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade addressed the task force to make recommendation related to a healthier lifestyle.